

Appl. No. 10/650,301
Amdt. dated November 16, 2005
Reply to Office Action of October 7, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Please amend claim 1 as follows:

1. (currently amended): A combined electronic price label (EPL) and electronic sign (ES) system comprising:

- a plurality of electronic signs (ESs) for displaying promotional messages associated with promotion identification numbers;
- a plurality of EPLs;
- a promotional data file;
- a price lookup (PLU) file; and
- a host computer reading a combined EPL/ES data file separate from the PLU file and having a field for storing both promotion identification numbers and an item identification numbers, the host computer determining whether a particular identification number stored in said field of the EPL/ES data file is a promotion identification number associated with an ES or an item identification number associated with an EPL, and, when the promotion identification number is associated with an ES, said host computer reading the promotional message corresponding to the promotion identification number from the promotional data file and sending a promotional display message to the ES which includes a command for the ES to display the promotional message.

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2. (canceled)

3. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 further wherein the promotional data file further includes a plurality of promotional messages, and wherein the host computer utilizes the identification number to provide an index to select one of the plurality of promotional messages from the promotional data file for transmission to the ES.

4. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the message to the EPL includes a command for the EPL to display a price if the identification number is associated with the EPL.

5. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the identification number:

provides a message offset pointer indicating a location of the promotional message, if the identification number is associated with the ES, and

provides a price offset pointer indicating a location of a price displayed by the EPL, if the identification number is associated with the EPL.

6. (canceled)

7. (canceled)

8. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the promotional message is associated with an offer.

9. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 8 wherein the offer applies to a family of items which are not associated with a single PLU number.

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10. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the promotional message includes bundled price information associated with an offer.

11. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the ES displays a default message when the ES is not displaying the promotional message.

12. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the message sent to the ES includes a time period for which the promotional message is to be displayed.

13. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the ES displays a default message after the time period has expired.

14. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 13 wherein the ES displays the default message before the message is received.

15. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the promotional message includes a frequent buyer price.

16. (previously presented): A method of displaying a promotional message by a combined electronic price label (EPL) and electronic sign (ES) system comprising the steps of:

(a) reading a record associated with an EPL or an ES from a combined EPL/ES data file separate from a price lookup (PLU) file, the record having a field for storing both a promotion identification number and an item identification number;

(b) determining whether a particular identification number stored in said field of the combined EPL/ES data file is a promotion identification number associated with an ES or an item identification number associated with an EPL;

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(c) reading a promotional data file to determine the promotional message, when the record is associated with the ES;

(d) sending a promotional display message to the ES; and

(e) displaying the promotional message by the ES.

17. (original): The method of claim 16 wherein step (b) utilizes a flag which indicates if the record is associated with an EPL or an ES.

18. (original): The method of claim 16 further comprising, before step (a), the step of: displaying a default promotional message by the ES.

19. (original): The method of claim 16 wherein the promotional display message includes a time period for which the promotional message is to be displayed.

20. (original): The method of claim 19 further comprising the step of:

(f) displaying a default promotional message after the time period has elapsed.

21. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein if the identification number is associated with the EPL, then the host computer looks up a price for the EPL in the PLU and sends a message to the EPL.